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U W BYLCZC BYL A0560

APX-CASEY; 3RD LO: A095;210

URGENT

FEDS: FIRST 7 GRAFS NEW

BY MICHAEL J. SNIFFEN

GRND

ROBERT PARRY

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITERS

WASHINGTON (AP) - REPUBLICAN SUPPORT FOR WILLIAM J. CASEY, PRESIDENT REAGAN'S EMBATTLED CIA DIRECTOR, CRUMBLING HOUR BY HOUR TODAY AS REAGAN SAID HE WOULD CONSULT WITH SENATORS ABOUT THE TURBULENT AFFAIR. TWO KEY REPUBLICAN SENATORS JOINED SEN. BARRY GOLDWATER, CHAIRMAN OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE, IN CALLING FOR CASEY TO STEP DOWN. SEN. TED STEVENS, R-ALASKA, SAID HE THINKS CASEY SHOULD QUIT "FOR THE GOOD OF THE AGENCY."

SEN. WILLIAM ROTH, R-DEL., A MEMBER OF THE SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE, ALSO DEMANDED THAT CASEY RESIGN, SAYING HE FEELS IT IS NOW "IMPOSSIBLE FOR MR. CASEY TO EFFECTIVELY DISCHARGE HIS DUTIES."

AS THE OPPOSITION BUILT, REAGAN, LEAVING A CAPITOL HILL MEETING WITH HOUSE REPUBLICANS, AGAIN EXPRESSED FAITH IN HIS CIA DIRECTOR - "I HAVE NOT CHANGED MY MIND" ABOUT SUPPORTING CASEY - AND SAID: "I'M TALKING TO SENATORS TODAY" ABOUT THE BREWING CONTROVERSY.

STEVENS SAID THAT, BASED ON HIS TALKS WITH INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS, THERE WERE A NUMBER OF "MATTERS OF JUDGMENT" INVOLVING CASEY THAT TROUBLED SENATORS AND SAID HE PERCEIVED A SOLID, BIPARTISAN DESIRE FROM THE ENTIRE COMMITTEE THAT CASEY STEP ASIDE.

"THIS ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN FOR THE GOOD OF THE AGENCY," STEVENS TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE.

EARLIER, GOLDWATER ACCUSED CASEY OF DAMAGING THE SPY AGENCY AND SUGGESTED HE QUIT. SENATE MAJORITY LEADER HOWARD H. BAKER, R-TENN., SAID HE WOULD "BACK UP GOLDWATER IN WHATEVER HE DECIDES TO DO."

DEPUTY WHITE HOUSE: 5TH GRAF

AP-NY-07-24 1251E0T

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